

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT OSLO 1108 ACTION SECSTATE SECDEF 18 MAR

QUOTE

S E C R E T OSLO 1108

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FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER AND SECRETARY SCHLESINGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, MASS, NO, NATO

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT ISSUE

REFS: (A) OSLO 1041 (B) OSLO 954 (C) OSLO 911

SUMMARY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST ON AIRCRAFT
ISSUE INCLUDE MOST USEFUL VISIT OF MICHAEL MACDONALD
(DSAA), INCREASED DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF
NORWEGIANS TO REMAIN IN THE FOUR-NATION CONSORTIUM AND
RECOGNITION THAT THERE IS NO

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EASY SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS CREATED OVER "ESSENTIAL ROLE"

FOR DEFENSE COMMISSION. END SUMMARY

1. MACDONALD MEETING WITH NORWEGIANS MARCH 17-18 PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND ENABLED NORWEGIANS TO SIGNIFICANTLY REFINE THEIR THINKING ON THIS COMPLEX ISSUE. DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL WAS PRESENT FOR FIRST HOUR OF MARCH 17 SESSION WHICH WAS ALSO ATTENDED, AMONG OTHERS, BY HEAD OF DEFENSE COMMISSION SECRETARIAT AND BRATTELI CONFIDENT ERIC HIMLE, WHO IS PLAYING INCREASINGLY DOMINANT ROLE IN POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS HERE, AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE COPRODUCTION COORDINATOR ANDRESEN. IT HAS BECOME CLEAR FROM MACHONALD'S CONVERSATIONS AS WELL AS MY TWO LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH HIMLE THIS WEEK THAT NORWEGIANS ARE PRESENTLY PURSUING TWO CONTRADICTORY POLICIES: (A) CONTINUE TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP TO HOLD CONSORTIUM TOGETHER AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, TO PARTICIPATE IN COPRODUCTION SCHEME WITH CONSORTIUM BASED ON MOU; (B) ALLOW DEFENSE COMMISSION TO PERFORM ITS ESSENTIAL FUNCTION. THAT NORWEGIANS NOW UNDERSTAND PROBLEM AND ARE GEARING THEIR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS TO THE MOU IS, LCEARLY, A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN ITSELF. HOWEVER, NO SOLUTION AS TO HOW TO RECONCILE THE CONTRADICTORY POLICIES HAS EMERGED.

2. MY ASSESSMENT AT THIS STAGE IS THAT NORWAY WILL PURSUE A COURSE OF CALCULATED RISK TO INSURE THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION WITH THE HOPE THAT THE DEFENSE COMMISSION WILL ULTIMATELY ENDORSE THE DECISION. IT IS THIS COURSE OF ACTION THAT I EXPECT FOSTERVOLL TO RECOMMEND SUCCESSFULLY TO THE CABINET AND PLACE BEFORE THE STORTING FOR APPROVAL.

3. FOSTERVOLL, WHO WILL BE BRIEFING LABOR PARTY GROUP, DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN STORTING THIS WEEK, REMAINS IN FOREFRONT OF EFFORT TO INSURE NORWAY'S COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN CONSORTIUM. ERIC HIMLE ACCOMPANIED FOSTERVOLL ON HIS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TRIP OVER WEEKEND TO CONFER PRIVATELY WITH DANISH AND DUTCH DEFENSE MINISTERS (PARA 2, REF A). HIMLE REPORTS
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THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WERE FRANK, INFORMATIVE AND POSITIVE IN NATURE. HIMLE ALSO WILL BE ACCOMPANYING FOSTERVOLL TO THE MARCH 24 MOD MEETING. AS A RESULT OF WEEKEND DISCUSSIONS, NORWEGIANS HAVE ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING STRATEGY: IF THE FOUR NATIONS ARE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE 24TH, NORWAY ENVISAGES A SERIES OF FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS TO FINALIZE THE TEXT OF THE MOU; IF, HOWEVER, SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS (RESULTING FROM PROBLEMS WITHIN

AN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY OR OVER TEXT OF MOU) ARISE ON THE
24TH, NORWAY WOULD OPPOSE FURTHER DISCUSSION IN AN EFFORT TO
KEEP THE CONSORTIUM TOGETHER AND PROPOSE AN ADDITIONAL
MOD MEETING AT A LATER DATE.

4. TO COMPLETE OUR COVERAGE OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN
NORWAY AS ISSUE MOVES TOWARD CONSIDERATION BY NORWEGIAN
STORTING, I PLAN, WITH FOSTERVOLL'S ENTHUSIASTIC BLESSING,
TO CONFER WITH LARS KORVALD, CHAIRMAN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY, AND
DAGFINN VAARVIK, CHAIRMAN
CENTER PARTY, AT EARLIEST APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY.
MY LUNCH WITH PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI (PARA 5,
REF B) IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 19.
BURNE UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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